

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
MANUSCRIPT DIVISION

The Papers of
WERNHER VON BRAUN

The papers of Wernher Von Braun (1912-1977), engineer, rocket scientist, and space program administrator, were given to the Library of Congress by Dr. Von Braun, 1962-71. Additional papers were deposited in the Library by Dr. Von Braun in 1971.

The literary rights in the unpublished writings of Wernher Von Braun in this collection and in other collections of papers in the Library of Congress have been dedicated to the public.

Photographs and tapes have been transferred to the appropriate divisions of the Library of Congress where they are identified as part of these papers.

Linear feet of shelf space occupied: 22.8
Approximate number of items: 20,000

Biographical Note

1912, Mar. 23	Born, Wirsitz, East Prussia (now part of Poland)
1930	Assistant to Hermann Oberth, experimenting with small liquid rocket motors Founding member, Rocket Field, Berlin, sponsored and financed by German Rocket Society
1931	Student, Institute of Technology, Zurich, Switzerland
1932	B.S., Institute of Technology, Berlin
1932-37	Chief, Testing Station, German Army Proving Ground, Kummersdorf
1934	Ph. D., University of Berlin
1937-45	Technical director, German Rocket Research Center, Peenemünde Responsible for <u>V-2</u> Long-range Rocket and A.A. Guided Missile Wasserfall
1943-45	Research professor, Peenemünde
1945	Captured by U.S. Army and taken to United States
1945-50	Technical adviser at White Sands, N. Mex., Proving Grounds Project director, Research and Development Service, U.S. Army Ordnance Corps, Fort Bliss, Tex.
1947	Married Maria Von Quistorp
1950-56	Chief, Guided Missile Development Division, Redstone Arsenal, Huntsville, Ala.

1953 Publication of The Mars Project (Urbana, University of Illinois Press. 91 p.), translated by Henry J. White
Publication of Man on the Moon (London, Sidgwick and Jackson. 134 p.), with Fred L. Whipple and Willy Ley. Also published as Conquest of the Moon (New York, Viking Press. 126 p.)

1955 Naturalized as American citizen

1956 Publication of The Exploration of Mars (New York, Viking Press. 176 p.), with Willy Ley

1956-60 Director, Development Operations Division, Army Ballistic Missile Agency, Huntsville

1957 Received Distinguished Civilian Service Award, Department of Defense

1958 Received Dr. Robert Goddard Memorial Trophy

1960 Publication of First Men to the Moon (New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston. 96 p.)

1960-70 Director, George C. Marshall Space Flight Center, National Aeronautic and Space Administration, Huntsville

1967 Publication of History of Rocketry & Space Travel (New York, Crowell. 244 p.), with Frederick I. Ordway III
Publication of Space Frontier (New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston. 216 p.)

1970-72 Deputy Associate Administrator for Planning, NASA, Washington, D.C.

1972 Vice president, Engineering and Development, Fairchild Industries, Germantown, Md.

1975 Founded the National Space Institute

1977, June 16 Died, Alexandria, Va.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Wernher Von Braun span the years 1796 to 1970, with the bulk of the material concentrated in the decades 1950 to 1970. A few items in the collection predate Von Braun's emigration to the United States and his postwar duties with the U.S. Army as part of the "Paperclip" project, but most of the papers relate to his work at the Redstone Arsenal and the George C. Marshall Space Flight Center, Huntsville, Ala. Consisting largely of office files and fan letters, the collection includes extensive public relations matter, general correspondence, an invitation file, subject files, speeches and writings, and miscellaneous printed matter. Nearly half of the papers consist of fan mail, some of it topical and scientific correspondence requiring original replies by staff members, but more of it from autograph seekers and admirers who were especially prolific following major space accomplishments. Also in the collection are bound volumes of photocopies of Von Braun's scrapbooks, 1930 to 1958, which treat the evolution of rocketry from the perspective of his V-2 research for Nazi Germany and his guided missile work for the U.S. Army after World War II.

Born in Wirsitz, East Prussia, in 1912, Wernher Von Braun early became interested in rocketry and pursued studies at the Berlin Technical Institute and the University of Berlin which prepared him for his career. His success as a rocket expert coincided with the technological outburst of the World War II period and the space and arms developments in the postwar period. These papers emphasize Von Braun's scientific contributions to the U.S. space program as well as focusing on his role as a spokesman for U.S. space exploration in competition with the Soviet Union. They portray his association with the American Rocket Society and the Gesellschaft für Weltraumsforschung, his duties as chief of Guided Missile Development at Huntsville, and his directorship of NASA's Marshall Flight Center. The files most reflective of Von Braun's official responsibilities are the subject files and the general correspondence, which include letters, notes, memoranda, and such related material as technical reports, drawings, charts, and personnel forms.

Von Braun was an early advocate of space conquest and exploration whose views were carried by popular weeklies and the daily press years before the success of Sputnik imparted greater urgency to a stepped-up American space effort. Two files of more than usual interest are the subject files regarding Congress and space, and a folder entitled "A. V. Grosse Action" which contains responses to Grosse's plan for the launching of an American satellite in the mid-1950's. Also of significance are speeches, which Von Braun gave before scientific, business, and other organizations. These speeches delineate his projections and later his reminiscences of the development of space science. Other important papers include manuscripts of some of Von Braun's books, his correspondence with German and American publishers, his exchanges with such former German rocket specialists as Herman Oberth, and his correspondence and memoranda concerning the major American space shots from the Explorer firings to Apollo 11.

Von Braun moved from Alabama to NASA headquarters in Washington shortly after the 1969 moon landing, and in 1972 he left government service for private industry. The latter facets of his career are not covered by the papers in this collection. Absent also are family papers and primary documentation of his work on the V-2 and his capture and impressment into the service of the U.S. Army.

Correspondents in this collection include Aristad V. Grosse, Donald Jackson, Robert C. Truax, Frederick C. Durant III, F. D. McHugh, Armitage Watkins, Igor Sikorsky, Fred L. Whipple, John S. Burlew, Wilbur M. Brucker, J. B. Medaris, I. M. Levitt, Willy Ley, Cornelius Ryan, Chesley Bonestell, Heinz Hermann K lle, Heinz Gartmann, G. Loeser, K. Shuette, Jupp Gerhards, Otto Wolfgang Bechtle, D. C. Fahrney, Kenneth W. Gatland, Bert J. Slattery, Ernst Stuhlinger, Lee James, J. Preston Layton, James J. Harford, Walter R. Dornberger, A. J. Eggers, and John Sparkman.

Von Braun had considerable correspondence with leaders in the aerospace industry, including Aerojet General Corporation, Lockheed, General Dynamics, General Motors, Ford, Chrysler, Sperry-Rand, Douglas Aircraft, General Electric, Northrop Corporation, and International Business Machines. The bulk of the letters and memoranda, however are from NASA headquarters in Washington and from Marshall Space Flight Center.

Description of Series

<u>Container Nos.</u>	<u>Series</u>
1-12	<p>General Correspondence, 1950-69.</p> <p>Letters, memoranda, and notes sent and received, with related matter such as enclosed technical reports, photographs, charts, drawings, personnel forms, etc. Organized by year and alphabetically within.</p>
13-14	<p>Invitation File, 1952-67.</p> <p>Letters of invitation received, with replies, arranged chronologically.</p>
14-20	<p>Public Relations Correspondence, Series A, 1952-58.</p> <p>Fan mail and public correspondence of secondary importance, with Von Braun's replies, organized chronologically by month.</p>
20-39	<p>Public Relations Correspondence, Series B, 1958-67.</p> <p>Fan mail and public correspondence of secondary importance, with Von Braun's replies, organized alphabetically and by year.</p>
39	<p>Public Relations Correspondence, Series C, 1967-69.</p> <p>Autograph requests and form letter replies, organized chronologically by year.</p>
40-45	<p>Subject File, 1949-68.</p> <p>Subject correspondence sent and received; organizational minutes, reports, and printed matter; personnel forms; bibliographies; notes; and miscellaneous material. Arranged alphabetically according to subject matter and chronologically therein.</p>

Appended to the collection are materials which have been deposited rather than given to the Library and which consist mostly of speeches from the mid-1960's and fan mail from the Apollo 11 mission.

Container Nos.

Series

46-52

Speeches and Writings, 1934-69.

Handwritten, typewritten, near-print, printed, and photocopies of speeches and writings by Von Braun and others. Arranged chronologically, with longer and undated book and article drafts placed alphabetically by title near the end of the series, followed by speeches and writings by others arranged chronologically.

52-57

Miscellany, 1796-1968.

Assorted vellum diplomas, loose clippings chronologically arranged by year, and photocopies of Von Braun's scrapbooks arranged in rough chronological sequence.

PAPERS ON DEPOSIT

58

General Correspondence, 1953-69.

Letters, memoranda, and notes sent and received, arranged alphabetically in the period 1953-69.

58-60

Public Relations Correspondence, 1963-70.

Autograph requests and congratulatory letters, mostly pertaining to the Apollo 11 mission. Arranged by year with additional distinctions between autograph requests, congratulatory letter, and foreign language letters from foreigners, foreign VIPs, and American citizens.

60-61

Subject File, 1959-69.

Personnel files, thank you letters sent to Apollo 11 team members, and photocopies of correspondence and related matter concerning the House Committee on Science and Astronautics. Arranged alphabetically by title of subject.

Container Nos.

Series

PAPERS ON DEPOSIT

61

Speeches and Writings, 1950-70.

Handwritten drafts and near-print and photocopies of speeches by Von Braun, arranged chronologically.

61

Miscellany, 1913-67.

Miscellaneous printed matter, arranged chronologically.

Container List

<u>Container Nos.</u>	<u>Contents</u>
GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE, 1950-69	
1	1950, A-Z 1952, A-Z 1953, A-Z (3 folders) 1954, A-Z (3 folders) 1955, A-D
2	1955, E-Z (3 folders) 1956, A-Z (3 folders) 1957, A-G
3	1957, H-Z (3 folders) 1958, A-Z (5 folders)
4	1959, A-Z (5 folders) 1960, A-G (3 folders)
5	1960, H-Z (6 folders) 1961, A-B (2 folders)
6	1961, C-O (10 folders)
7	1961, P-Z (5 folders) 1962, A-C (2 folders)
8	1962, D-Sh (7 folders)
9	1962, Si-Z (2 folders) 1963, A-K (5 folders)
10	1963, L-Z (4 folders) 1964, A-Z (3 folders) 1965, A-G
11	1965, H-Z (3 folders) 1966, A-Z (3 folders)

Container Nos.

Contents

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE, 1950-69 (Continued)

12 1967, A-Z (2 folders)
 1968, A-Z
 1969, A-Z

INVITATION FILE, 1952-67

 1952-57 (4 folders)

13 1958-67 (8 folders)

PUBLIC RELATIONS CORRESPONDENCE, SERIES A, 1952-58

14 1952-Oct. 1954 (10 folders)

15 Nov. 1954-Apr. 1956 (11 folders)

16 May 1956-Nov. 1957 (9 folders)

17 Nov.-Dec. 1957 (6 folders)

18 Dec. 1957-Feb. 1958 (6 folders)

19 Feb.-Sept. 1958 (7 folders)

20 Oct.-Dec. 1958 (2 folders)

PUBLIC RELATIONS CORRESPONDENCE, SERIES B, 1958-67

 1958, A-C1 (5 folders)

21 1958, D-Gz (8 folders)

22 1958, H-Le (7 folders)

23 1958, Lf-Q (7 folders)

Container Nos.ContentsPUBLIC RELATIONS CORRESPONDENCE, SERIES B, 1958-67
(Continued)

24	1958, R-Tz (7 folders)
25	1958, U-Z (5 folders) 1959, A-D (4 folders)
26	1959, E-Q (7 folders)
27	1959, R-Z (3 folders) 1960, A-C1 (5 folders)
28	1960, Cm-I (9 folders)
29	1960, J-N (9 folders)
30	1960, O-Sz (9 folders)
31	1960, T-Z (5 folders) 1961, A-C (3 folders)
32	1961, D-K (7 folders)
33	1961, L-R (6 folders)
34	1961, R-V (6 folders)
35	1961, W-Z and anonymous (4 folders) 1962, A-F (4 folders)
36	1962, G-S (8 folders)
37	1962, T-Z 1963, A-G (6 folders)
38	1963, H-V (7 folders)
39	1963, W-Z and anonymous (2 folders) 1967, A-Z

Container Nos. Contents

PUBLIC RELATIONS CORRESPONDENCE, SERIES C, 1967-69

39 (cont.) Autograph requests, 1967-69 (4 folders)

SUBJECT FILE, 1949-68

40 Alabama's World Fair Commission, 1962
 Alabama State Fair Exhibit, 1961
 American Rocket Society, 1954-Apr. 1958
 (4 folders)

41 American Rocket Society, May 1958-60 (6 folders)

42 American Rocket Society, photocopies, 1952-57
 American Ballistic Missile Agency, 1958-61
 Astronautica Acta, 1954-58
 A. V. Grosse Action, launching a satellite,
 1951-57
 Bibliographies of Von Braun's writings
 Calculations for moon book
 Colliers, 1951-53 (2 folders)
 Congress and the space program, 1963-64 (2
 folders)

43 Congress and the space program, 1965-66 (2
 folders)
 Dedication of Marshall Space Flight Center,
 thank you letters, 1960
 German correspondence, 1949-54 (2 folders)
 German correspondence, Gesellschaft für
 Weltraumforschung, 1950-53 (2 folders)
 German personnel, 1952
 Guided missile development, miscellaneous
 declassified material, 1952-65

44 Mercury flight, congratulations, 1961
 Mercury-Redstone 3, congratulations, 1961
 Mercury-Redstone 5, congratulations, 1961

<u>Container Nos.</u>	<u>Contents</u>
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SUBJECT FILE, 1949-68 (Continued)

- | | |
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| 44 (cont.) | NASA conferences, 1961-63
Miscellaneous office notes, memoranda, drafts,
etc., 1963-68
Press relations, 1958-60 (3 folders)
Publications, correspondence concerning, 1949-53 |
| 45 | Publications, correspondence concerning, 1954-56
<u>Ranger 7-9</u> lunar flights (3 folders)
<u>Saturn</u> rocket, congratulations, 1961
<u>Saturn C-1</u> launching, invitations, 1962
Steuben Society of America, 1960-61
Symposium on air travel in 30 years, 1955
Thiel, Adolph K., dissertation |

SPEECHES AND WRITINGS, 1934-69

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| 46 | 1947-Apr. 1959 (9 folders) |
| 47 | May 1959-Aug. 1961 (10 folders) |
| 48 | Sept. 1961-June 1968 (7 folders) |
| 49 | July 1968-69 and undated (5 folders)
"Across the Moon" |
| 50 | <u>Conquest of the Moon</u>
<u>The Exploration of Mars</u>
"First Flight to the Moon" (4 folders)
<u>The Mars Project</u> |
| 51 | <u>The Mars Project</u> , handwritten draft of the
scientific appendix
"Raketentechnik and Raumfahrtforschung,"
Ph. D. dissertation, 1934
"Voyage to Mars"
"Voyage to the Moon" |
| 52 | By others, 1962-65 (3 folders) |

Container Nos.Contents

MISCELLANY, 1796-1968

- 52 (cont.) Assorted vellum diplomas, 1796-1823
 Clippings, 1934-68 (3 folders)
 Citations and awards, 1952-61 (photocopies)
 German items, 1928-33 (photocopies)
 Programs, 1957-61 (photocopies)
 University degrees, 1958-59 (photocopies)
- 53 (cabinet 3:
 drawer 10) Scrapbooks (oversize)
 Awards and photocopies of awards
 Rocketry, 1930-34
 German scientists come to America, 1945-52
 Rocketry, 1946-49
- 54 (cabinet 3:
 drawer 10) Rocket to the moon, 1948-55
 Space flight campaign, 1949-54
 Rocket research center started at Redstone
 Arsenal, 1950-52
- 55 (cabinet 3:
 drawer 10) Peenemünde in U.S.A., 1950
 Practicality of space flight, 1952-56
 Immigration to the United States, 1963
- 56 (cabinet 3:
 drawer 10) Space flight, 1953-56
 Space exploration, 1953-54
- 57 (cabinet 3:
 drawer 10) I.G.Y. project, 1955-57
 Missiles, 1956
 U.S. Army-Jupiter, 1956-58

PAPERS ON DEPOSIT

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE, 1953-69

- 58 1953-69, A-Z

<u>Container Nos.</u>	<u>Contents</u>
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PAPERS ON DEPOSIT

PUBLIC RELATIONS CORRESPONDENCE, 1963-70

58 (cont.)	1963-68 1969 Autograph requests (2 folders) Congratulatory letters (3 folders)
59	Foreign language letters (6 folders)
60	Foreign language letters (2 folders) Foreign language letters from citizens Foreign language letters from VIPs 1970, autograph requests

SUBJECT FILE, 1959-69

	<u>Apollo 11</u> , thank you letters sent, 1969 Committee on Science and Astronautics (photo-copies), 1959-61 Personnel files, 1960-66 (2 folders)
61	Personnel files, 1967

SPEECHES AND WRITINGS, 1950-70

1950-70 (6 folders)
Miscellaneous rough drafts, undated (2 folders)

MISCELLANY, 1913-67

Printed matter, 1913-67

Processed by: Allan J. Teichroew
Date completed: January 1978